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By ELISABETH BUMILLER, NY Times

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WASHINGTON — The nation's top military officer said Wednesday that he expected the Pentagon to ask Congress in the next few months for emergency financing to support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, even though President Obama has pledged to end the Bush administration practice of paying for the conflicts with so-called supplemental funds that are outside the normal Defense Department budget.

The financing would be on top of the \$130 billion that Congress authorized for the wars just last month.

The military officer, Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, did not say how much additional money would be needed, but one figure in circulation within the Pentagon and among outside defense budget analysts is \$50 billion.

Representative John Murtha, the Pennsylvania Democrat who is chairman of the House appropriations defense subcommittee, cited \$40 billion

last week as a hypothetical amount for the supplemental financing request. The number represented a standard calculation of \$1 billion for every 1,000 troops deployed.

Defense officials said the final request would depend on the number of additional troops Mr. Obama decided to send to Afghanistan. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the top NATO commander in Afghanistan, has asked for 40,000 more troops on top of the 68,000 American troops already there.

The request is likely to ignite objections from Democrats on Capitol Hill who are increasingly alarmed about the eight-year-old war in Afghanistan, and it could become a vehicle for a battle between Mr. Obama and his liberal Democratic base.

At the National Press Club on Wednesday, Admiral Mullen said he anticipated the need for more money for the wars in the coming year beyond the \$130 billion authorized for the 2010 fiscal year, which runs from Oct. 1, 2009, until Sept. 30, 2010. He was responding to a questioner who asked, "Assuming that U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan increase, do you expect that the Defense Department will submit an emergency supplemental funding request during the coming months?"

Admiral Mullen replied: "From what I can see, I certainly think there will be some requirement. I just don't know exactly what it will be yet."

Admiral Mullen's spokesman, Capt. John Kirby, said afterward that although the admiral wanted to move away from supplemental defense financing, there might be "a need for another supplemental on the unique and current demands of dynamic operations in two theaters of war."

The White House had little comment on Admiral Mullen's remarks. "The president's budget provides a full-year funding for anticipated costs in Iraq and Afghanistan, and he has made clear his intent to fund these wars through the normal budgeting process," Tommy Vietor, a White House spokesman, said in an e-mail message. "No decisions have been made about additional costs related to new resource requests from the Department of Defense."

Although the size of any request would depend on the number of extra forces sent, Defense Department officials say they are likely to need more money even without a buildup. Robert F. Hale, the Pentagon comptroller, recently told staff members of the House Appropriations Committee that it would be hard to get through September 2010 with \$130 billion, regardless of a troop increase, said a Congressional staff member who did not want to be identified as discussing internal matters. Mr. Hale declined to comment.

In March, Mr. Hale told the House Budget Committee that \$130 billion would be enough for the year and that he did not expect to ask for more. But he did caution that "there may be significant unforeseen developments or changes in wartime strategy or tactics that cannot be addressed with existing resources."

Mr. Obama did include the \$130 billion for the wars as part of his regular \$668 billion defense budget this year, the first time that has happened since 2001. President George W. Bush regularly financed the wars with emergency requests that usually came after the Pentagon budget was introduced.

In April, before the current Pentagon budget was passed, the Obama administration asked Congress for approval of an emergency \$83.4 billion to pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through Sept. 30. The administration said the money was needed because legislation passed during the Bush administration provided only enough money to pay for the wars through midyear.

Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, said at the time that the request was unavoidable and that it would be the last outside the normal budget process.